Surgical management of cutaneous tumour: part I

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The skin is the largest organ of the body, and tumours of the skin represent a significant proportion of workload to dermatologists, plastic surgeons and other clinicians. Since cutaneous tumours are superficial and can be easily accessed, surgical procedures for diagnosis and treatment are commonly the first steps of management. The amount and extent of surgery done by an individual clinician vary according to one's experience and preference as well as the patient's perspective. The nature of the tumour, the location and underlying structure as well as the physical and psychological condition of the patients are to be seriously weighed. This article is divided into two parts, the principles of using different skin biopsy methods for diagnosis, the technique of excision and closure will be addressed in the first part while skin grafting and flap reconstruction that may be required when the defect cannot be closed primarily, the choice of suture material, the commonly encountered malignant and benign tumours will be discussed in the second part. (H.K. Dermatol. Venereol. Bull. (2003) 11, 58-66)

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